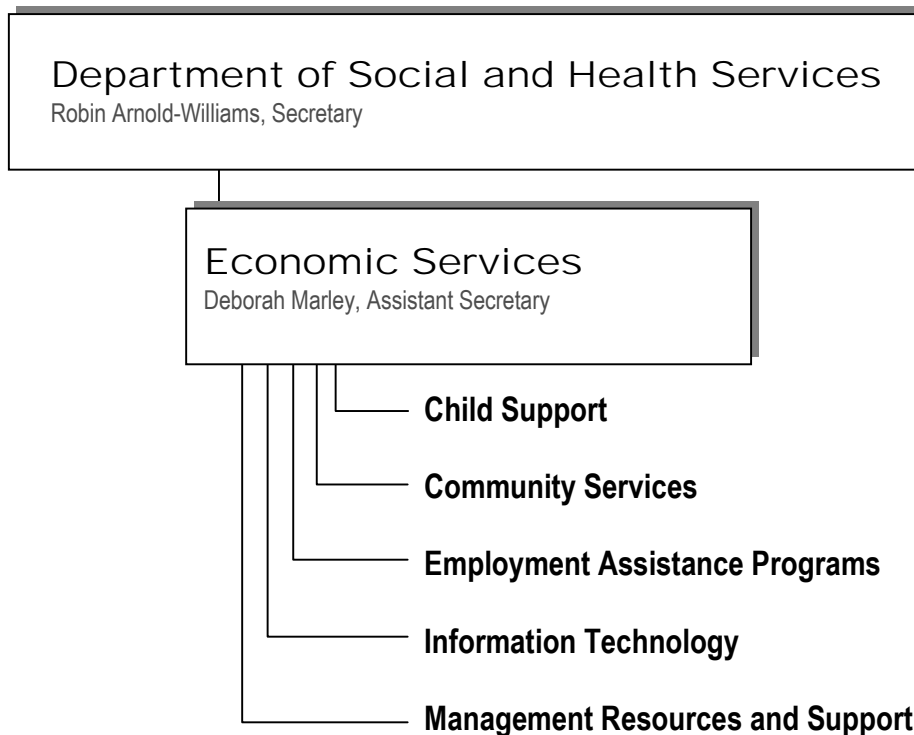




Strategic Plan 2007-2011
**Economic Services
Administration**



Purpose of This Document

This strategic plan communicates how we will advance our mission and goals in a changing environment and meet future challenges so that we can better serve vulnerable populations in Washington State. It is a road map that guides the business, policies, and improvement strategies for our organization, employees, and partners.

Acknowledgements

Development of the ESA Strategic Plan is a dynamic process, rather than a stagnant document, that involves managers and staff at all levels. We offer a special thanks to all those who take time from already over-loaded schedules to regularly contribute to this critical effort. For more information about this document please contact Roxie Schalliol at (360) 902-0751 or by email at schalrh@dshs.wa.gov.

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Executive Summary

Almost one out of every four Washington citizens turns to DSHS every day for assistance...and over 60% of those families and individuals need help with cash, food, child support, child care, or other services available through Economic Services. Each day, over 4,200 Economic Services Administration employees provide families across Washington State with the resources and help they need to build better lives.

In SFY 2004, the Economic Services Administration served more than 942,000 people — representing 15.3% of all Washington State residents.

ESA's core services focus on:

- **Poverty Reduction & Self-sufficiency** — Helping low-income people meet their basic needs and achieve economic independence through cash grants, food and medical assistance, employment-focused services, subsidized child care, and child support enforcement. Major programs include WorkFirst (Washington's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program), Basic Food (formerly the Food Stamp Program), General Assistance for the Unemployable, Refugee Assistance, and Working Connections Child Care.
- **Child Support Enforcement** — Ensuring parents live up to the responsibility of supporting their children and improving the self-sufficiency of families through increased financial and medical support. For many single-parent families, child support payments constitute an essential portion of their income and enhance their economic security.

Economic Services Administration serves many clients who live on the margin. If they are not receiving a cash grant, they may be relying on food assistance, work-related support services, assistance with child support, or child care subsidies. A family crisis or change in the economy, even a small one, can force these families into situations requiring public assistance, whether it's the full support of a cash grant or temporary assistance to avoid losing housing. When unemployment rates rise or there are downturns in the overall economy, the demand for services increases, and with that demand comes increased pressures on programs, funding, staffing, and other resources.

ESA's strategic plan is a dynamic process, rather than a stagnant document, that involves staff, leaders, and stakeholders. The plan focuses on four areas key to effectively serve those in need:

- **Providing quality services to our CUSTOMERS...**

Goal: People receive services and support to help them achieve self-sufficiency. WE...

- Quickly connect individuals and families to the cash, medical, work-related, and other services and benefits they need
- Reduce the number of people who go hungry
- Enhance the economic security of children through child support efforts

Goal: Families and individuals receive quality services and are treated with dignity and respect. WE...

- Provide responsive, accurate, and timely delivery of services
- Encourage community and consumer input in policy development and service delivery
- Provide culturally competent services to families and individuals
- Work with Tribes to ensure services are provided in ways that best meet the needs of Native Americans

- **Appreciating and respecting STAFF...**

Goal: ESA leads and develops an effective workforce. WE...

- Recruit and retain competent employees
- Improve access to relevant, quality training and professional development
- Develop and support strong, principle-centered leaders

Goal: ESA has the infrastructure, information, and systems to help people do their jobs. WE...

- Provide staff with the equipment, business system applications, and technology to do their jobs
- Use collaborative planning and decision-making to implement major changes
- Provide staff a safe and appropriate work environment

- **Valuing our PARTNERS...**

Goal: ESA coordinates and integrates services to leverage and align resources to better serve families. WE...

- Partner within and outside ESA to coordinate and integrate services

- ***Serving as good STEWARDS...***

Goal: ESA is fiscally and socially responsible organization that provides quality stewardship of public funds. WE...

- Manage programs and services within the budget/FTEs allocated
- Use audits and performance reviews to mitigate/manage risks in all aspects of the business and to assure quality services at appropriate cost
- Support business practices to protect the environment and encourage efficient use of resources

Chapter 1 • Our Guiding Directions

MISSION

Our mission is to provide the resources and support that help people build better lives.

VISION

Our programs and services reduce poverty and hunger, improve the lives of those who turn to us for help, and build stronger, healthier families and communities across Washington State.

To achieve this vision, we work in collaboration with many partners to offer services that help:

- Struggling families and individuals meet their basic economic needs and, to the greatest degree possible, support themselves and their children.
- Children receive the financial and medical support they need from their parents.
- People who are elderly or have a disability receive the financial, medical and other essential support they need.
- Tribal members and families meet their economic needs through government-to-government agreements and service coordination.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We value:

- Respectful, coordinated, customer-focused service
- Teamwork
- Open, honest communication
- Staff appreciation, participation and professional development
- Diversity of cultures and thought
- Respectful work environments
- Community partnerships
- Integrity and accountability
- Fiscal responsibility
- Data-informed decisions
- Being proactive
- Continuous improvement

PRIORITIES OF GOVERNMENT

The Priorities of Government (POG) provide an excellent framework for the ESA's Strategic Plan and have helped guide key performance indicators. ESA's strategic initiatives fall within two POG areas:

- Improve the **economic vitality** of business and individuals

ESA's primary **customer service** goal is providing services and supports that assist people in avoiding or reducing poverty and help them reach their highest level of self-sufficiency. Whether it is providing cash grants, work-related support activities, basic food support, child support or child care, medical, or other related services, the focus is to help individuals achieve economic stability and self-sufficiency.

- Improve the ability of state government to **achieve results efficiently and effectively**

The remainder of ESA's goals involve efforts to improve efficiency and effectiveness by working with our partners; ensuring staff has the business applications, information, systems, training, and other support to do their jobs; and developing and maintaining a fiscally sound organization responsible for the stewardship of public funds.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

STATE STATUTORY AUTHORITY FOR ESA PROGRAMS

Aid to Needy Families & Individuals

RCW 74.04 – General Provisions – Administration. Establishes DSHS as the single state agency to establish and administer the following public assistance programs in accordance with federal law: General Assistance, Consolidated Emergency Assistance Program, State Supplementation of SSI, Food Stamp Program (Washington's Basic Food program), and any other public assistance program for which federal funds are provided.

RCW 74.04.500 - Food Stamp Program. Authorizes DSHS to establish a Food Stamp or benefit program under the federal Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended.

RCW 74.08 – Eligibility Generally – Standards of Assistance. Authorizes DSHS to provide financial assistance and services in accordance with federal rules on behalf of persons who are aged, blind or disabled.

RCW 74.08A.040 – Indian Tribes - Program Access – Funding. Directs DSHS to provide tribes with ongoing, meaningful opportunities to participate in the development, oversight, and operation of the WorkFirst program, provide equitable access to WorkFirst to Indian people who are not accessing Tribal TANF programs, coordinate and cooperate with tribes with Tribal TANF programs and transfer a fair and equitable amount of State MOE funds to the eligible Indian Tribe.

RCW 74.08A.120 – Immigrants - Food Assistance. Authorizes DSHS to establish a food assistance program for legal immigrants who are ineligible for the federal Food Stamp program. Rules for the immigrant food assistance program follow the rules of the federal Food Stamp program except for provisions pertaining to immigrant status.

RCW 74.08A.130 – Immigrants - Naturalization Facilitation. Directs DSHS to identify and proactively contact legal immigrants on public assistance to facilitate their applications for naturalization, and ensure that qualified legal immigrants apply for naturalization and are referred to or offered services that will assist them in the naturalization process.

RCW 74.12 – Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Authorizes DSHS to administer WorkFirst, the state's TANF cash assistance and welfare-to-work program, including child care, in accordance with P.L. 104-193 (Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996) and federal rules on behalf of families with dependent children.

RCW 74.25A – Employment Partnership Program Act. Establishes a voluntary program using public wage subsidies and employer matching salaries to create new jobs with livable wages and promotional opportunities for the chronically unemployed and underemployed persons. The statute empowers DSHS to establish pilot projects and administer grant monies.

RCW 80.36.470 – Washington Telephone Assistance Program – Eligibility. Establishes a telephone and community voice mail assistance program for adults receiving ongoing financial, food or medical assistance from DSHS. Former participants in community voice mail programs can also qualify for telephone assistance through the program. Authorizes DSHS, Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission, and Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development to adopt rules for the program.

Child Support Enforcement

RCW 26.09 – Dissolution of Marriage – Legal Separation. Establishes a requirement for parents to support their children.

RCW 26.18 – Child Support Enforcement. Authorizes DSHS to enforce child support obligations and supplements RCW 74.20A.

RCW 26.19 – Child Support Schedule. Establishes a child support schedule to insure that child support orders are adequate to meet a child's basic needs and to provide additional child support commensurate with the parents' income, resources, and standard of living. Apportions the child support obligation equitably between the parents.

RCW 26.21 -- Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (Formerly Uniform Reciprocal Enforcement of Support Act). Governs child support actions and case processing in cases involving parents who reside in different states (interstate cases).

RCW 26.26 – Uniform Parentage Act. Governs every determination of parentage in Washington.

RCW 26.23 – State Support Registry. Creates the Washington State Support Registry and authorizes DSHS to create a centralized registry for the recording and distribution of child support. Provides DSHS with administrative remedies for the enforcement of child support obligations.

RCW 26.25 – Cooperative Child Support Services – Indian Tribes. Encourages DSHS and Indian tribes to enter into cooperative child support agreements to provide culturally relevant child support services, consistent with state and federal laws, that are based on tribal laws and customs.

RCW 74.20 – Support of Dependent Children. Authorizes DSHS to enforce child support obligations.

RCW 74.20A – Support of Dependent Children – Alternative Method – 1971 Act. Provides DSHS with administrative authority to establish and enforce child support obligations.

FEDERAL STATUTORY AUTHORITY FOR ESA PROGRAMS

Aid to Needy Families & Individuals

Title IV-A – Social Security Act - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Authorizes the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and gives states wide flexibility to design TANF in ways that promote work, responsibility and self-sufficiency. TANF replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) programs. TANF is administered by states with federal block grant funds and matching state funds.

Title XII – Food Stamp Program. Establishes the eligibility criteria and benefit levels for the federal Food Stamp Program as created by the Food Stamp Reauthorization Act of 2002.

Title XIII – Restricting Welfare and Public Benefits for Aliens. Imposes eligibility restrictions upon qualified and non-qualified aliens to TANF, SSI, and Food Stamp benefits imposed under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996, P.L. 104-193.

Title XI – Repatriate Assistance Program. Authorizes the federal Department of Health and Human Services to provide temporary assistance to U.S. citizens who have been returned from foreign countries. The law specifies the conditions under which the funds can be used.

Title XVI – Supplemental Security Income. Establishes federal funding for the Supplemental Security Income Program to provide financial assistance to aged, blind, and disabled persons with limited income and resources. Authorizes the Social Security Administration to enter into agreements with states to provide supplemental payments.

PL 96-212 – Refugee Act of 1980. Amends the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide for the admission and resettlement of refugees. The law and its amendments also authorize federal assistance to states for the resettlement of refugees.

P.L. 104-193 – Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996. Gives states choices in how to structure their welfare programs. Federal funding is provided in the form of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grant, and is fixed at the same level for five years. PRWORA provides new federal child care funds, reauthorizes the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), and requires these combined funds to be administered as a unified program under the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF).

P.L. 105-33 – Balanced Budget Act (BBA) of 1997. Makes changes and implements numerous technical corrections to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996, P.L. 104-193.

PL 107-171 – Food Stamp Reauthorization Act of 2002. Reauthorizes the federal Food Stamp Program to provide for improved levels of nutrition among low-income households by supplementing households' food purchasing power. Empowers the federal Food and Nutrition Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture to develop policy and administer the program through the states. Also authorizes significant changes to the Food Stamp Program (outlined in Title IV, Nutrition Programs) and provides program funding through fiscal year 2007.

7 CFR, Chapter II – Food Stamp and Food Distribution Program. Federal regulations that implement the provisions of the Food Stamp Act of 1977, P.L. 88-525.

45 CFR, Part 260 – Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF). Implements the cash assistance, work participation, and data reporting requirements of the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996, P.L. 104-193.

47 USC Sec. 254 – Universal Service Telecommunications Act of 1996.

Gives states the option to provide telephone assistance to low-income individuals and families, and provides guidelines on subsidy amounts and payments to telephone companies.

Child Support Enforcement

Title IV-D – Child Support Enforcement, 45 CFR 300–310. Provides federal funds to states for the purpose of enforcing the support obligations owed by noncustodial parents to their children and the spouse or former spouse with whom children are living. States also locate noncustodial parents, establish paternity, and assure support to all children, including children whose families receive TANF.

42 USC 654 (33) – Cooperative Agreements. Authorizes states to enter into cooperative agreements with Indian tribes or tribal organizations.

28 USC 1738B – Full Faith and Credit for Child Support Orders. Requires courts of all U.S. territories, states and tribes to accord full faith and credit to a child support order issued by another state or tribe that properly exercised jurisdiction over the parties and the subject matter.

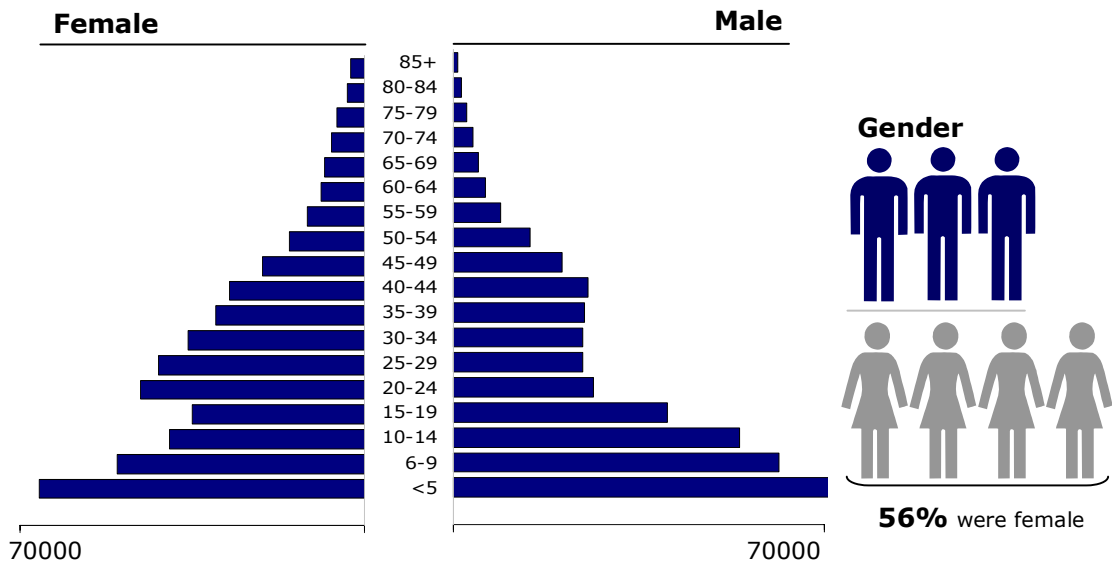
Chapter 2 • The People We Serve

INTRODUCTION

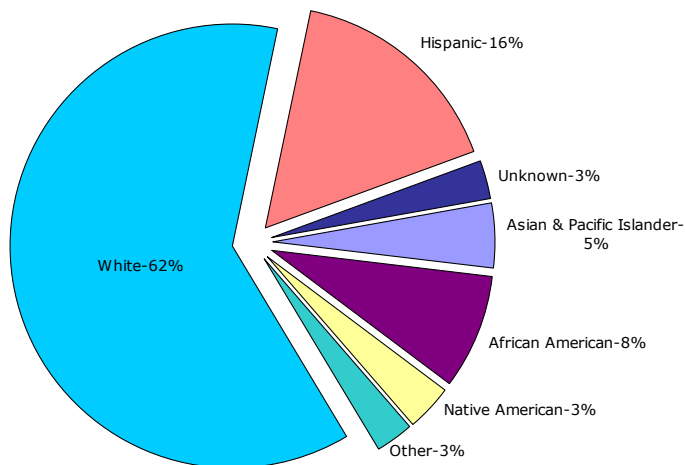
In SFY 2004, the Economic Services Administration served more than 942,000 people — representing 15.3% of all Washington State residents.

ESA | Age distribution

Source: DSHS, RDA, CSDB: April 1, 2005.

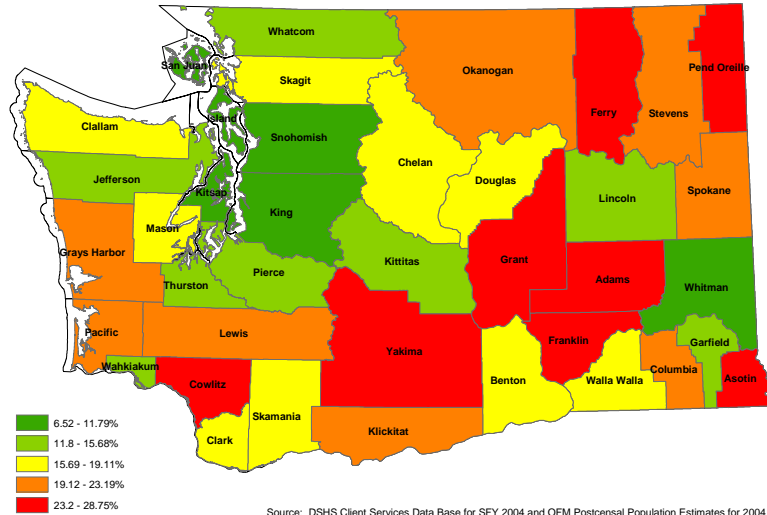


Race/Ethnicity of Clients SFY2004

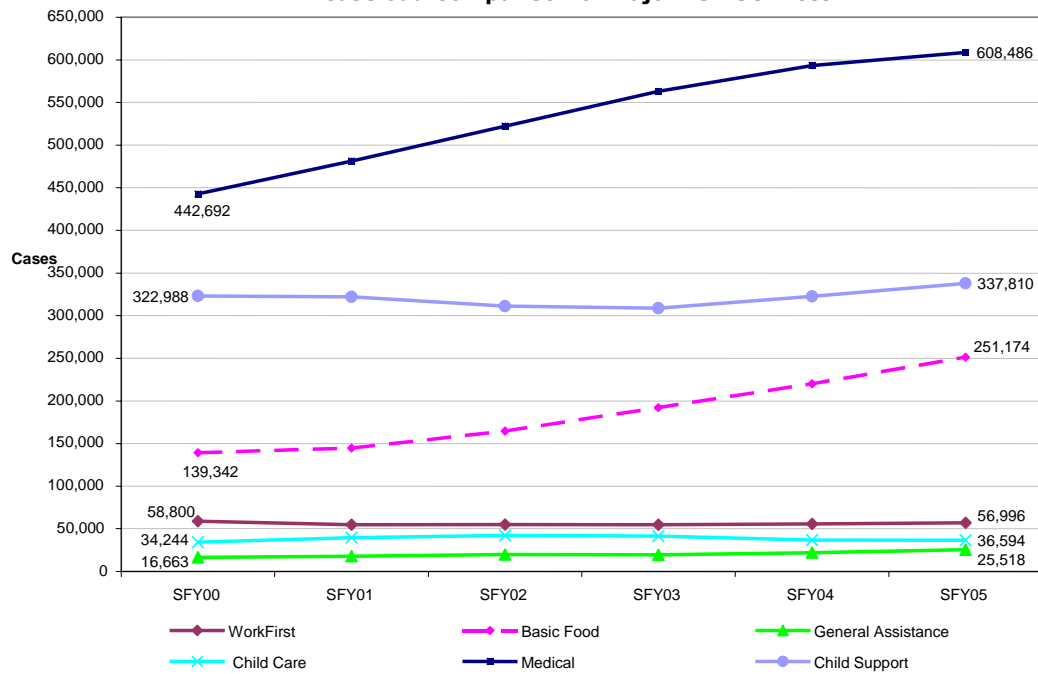


Persons of Hispanic Origin are counted only under the "Hispanic" category. Persons of more than one race were allocated to a single category in the following order of precedence: African American, Asian, Native American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White. Future analyses will provide more information about persons of more than one race.

Percentage of County Residents Receiving ESA Services



Caseload Comparison of Major ESA Services



DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES

ESA's core services focus on:

- ***Poverty Reduction & Self-sufficiency*** — Helping low-income people meet their basic needs and achieve economic independence through cash grants, food and medical assistance, employment-focused services, subsidized child care, and child support enforcement. Major programs include WorkFirst (Washington's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program), Basic Food (formerly the Food Stamp Program), General Assistance for the Unemployable, Refugee Assistance, and Working Connections Child Care.
- ***Child Support Enforcement*** — Ensuring parents live up to the responsibility of supporting their children and improving the self-sufficiency of families through increased financial and medical support. For many single-parent families, child support payments constitute an essential portion of their income and enhance their economic security. In SFY 2005, nearly \$639.6 million in child support (Title IV-D) for more than 434,000 children was collected in this state.

Chapter 3 • Appraisal of External Environment

POTENTIAL CHANGES IN ECONOMY THAT CAN AFFECT CLIENTS' NEEDS

Economic Services Administration serves many clients who live on the margin. If they are not receiving a cash grant, they may be relying on food assistance, work-related support services, assistance with child support, or child care subsidies. A family crisis or change in the economy, even a small one, can force these families into situations requiring public assistance, whether it's the full support of a cash grant or temporary assistance to avoid losing housing. When unemployment rates rise or there are downturns in the overall economy, the demand for services increases, and with that demand comes increased pressures on programs, funding, staffing, and other resources.

Families and Children in Poverty

According to the Kids Count State of Washington's Children report, 13% of Washington's population lives in poverty. But in single-parent families with children, that number rises to 31%. Approximately 38% of children are in families where no parent has full-time, year round employment. These families rely heavily on cash, food, medical, and other supports from ESA programs.

Child Support Collections

For poor families, child support is a significant source of income. During SFY 2005, 69.8% of Washington State's child support caseload was families that were on welfare (16.4%) or have left welfare (53.4%). Research shows that many non-custodial parents of poor children are poor themselves with very limited ability to provide support for their children.¹

Food Insecurity

Even with an economy on the rise, low-income families need assistance with basic supports such as food and medical care. Washington's Basic Food caseload increased almost 74% between 2001 and 2005. However, even with that growth, 45% of those who may be eligible do not receive benefits.

General Assistance

The State's General Assistance (GA) caseload has also increased dramatically, almost 43% since 2001. This growth may be attributed to a combination of economic conditions and high unemployment, population growth and aging, increased homelessness, cuts in other programs and services for the indigent at the state, city, and county levels, and restrictions on federal aid for some legal immigrant populations.

¹ According to a September 2000 report, *A Look at Poor Dads Who Don't Pay Child Support*, by the Urban Institute, a 1997 National Survey of America's Families found that 2.6 million non-custodial fathers in the U.S. have family incomes below the poverty line and that many face multiple employment barriers, such as a criminal record, lack of a high school education, relatively little work experience, substance abuse issues, and poor health.

TRENDS IN DEMOGRAPHIC AND CUSTOMER CHARACTERISTICS

WorkFirst Child-Only Cases

Nationally, states are seeing a growing proportion of their cash assistance caseloads represented by “child-only” cases. These cases, in which the only recipients of welfare benefits are children, now make up about one-third of the welfare caseload nationwide. This growth can be attributed in part to the overall decline in the TANF caseload as more families leave the program. But the number of child-only TANF cases is also increasing. In Washington State, child-only cases rose from 18.5% of the caseload (15,540 cases) in SFY 98 to about 39% of the caseload (almost 21,200 cases) in SFY 2005. The majority of these child-only cases (91%) have a relative or kinship caregiver (45%), a disabled parent who is receiving federal disability benefits (23%), or an undocumented immigrant parent who is not eligible for assistance (23%).

Immigrant Population

The demographics of the refugee and immigrant populations in Washington State are changing, with increasing numbers arriving from East Africa, Eastern Europe, and Russia. For example, over 40% of the people receiving Refugee Cash Assistance in SFY 2005 came from East Africa, 28% from Eastern Europe, and 13% from Russia. Almost 11% of the adults receiving WorkFirst benefits are legal immigrants. Many of these immigrants have low levels of education and English proficiency, which present significant barriers to self-sufficiency.

Self-Sufficiency & Child Well-being

With the advent of welfare reform and its self-sufficiency focus, there has been growing recognition of the multiple, complex barriers to employment facing many low-income families, as well as the need for a more comprehensive and integrated system of aid and supports for these families. Barriers like substance abuse, family violence, limited education, and mental health issues are also barriers to effective parenting.

Not surprisingly, families often receive services from the welfare, child welfare, and other human service programs simultaneously. For example, across the state, over 99% of the children who were on cash assistance during SFY2004 were also eligible for Medical Assistance services, and over 18% received additional services from the Children's Administration.

Better coordination between programs that provide basic income and other vital economic supports (such as WorkFirst, Basic Food and child support) and programs that provide more specialized services and supports (such as child abuse prevention and early intervention, and services for older relative caregivers) is key to helping families climb out of poverty and improving the well-being of low-income children.

ACTIVITIES LINK TO MAJOR PARTNERS

Economic Services is involved with a number of government agencies (state, federal and local), Tribes, and community groups in a variety of partnerships to improve the delivery of human services to individuals and families in need, and to leverage community resources and connections to great benefit. Below are examples of the innovative partnerships ESA is involved in.

Families and Communities Together (FACT)

FACT is a major DSHS integration initiative being piloted in Bellingham and Spokane that focuses on developing a comprehensive community network and seamless system of supports and resources for needy families and children. ESA is working closely with the Children's Administration and other parts of DSHS to build partnerships and strong multilateral relationships with each other, non-profits, local service providers and local governments that will result in better outcomes for children, families and communities.

Expedited Medical Benefits Help Persons with Serious Mental Illness Released from Confinement

ESA is collaborating with county jails, law enforcement, Department of Corrections, Regional Support Networks, Social Security Administration, and DSHS Health and Recovery Services Administration to implement provisions of Engrossed Second Substitute 1290 that requires speedy medical assistance determinations by local Community Services Offices for persons who are being discharged from an institutional setting, such as jails, correctional facilities, and state hospitals. The state began expedited medical eligibility determinations in January 2006 in areas of the state with large prison and jail populations. Research indicates that 15 – 20% of individuals being released from a correctional facility have a serious mental disorder that requires medications and medical treatment.

Collaboration with Tribes

Contracts & Cooperative Agreements. For the delivery of WorkFirst services, the Department and three other state agencies (Employment Security Department; Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development; and State Board for Community and Technical Colleges) enter into agreements with a diverse base of contractors, including community-based organizations, local governments, and tribes. Two tribes are currently contracting with the Department under this collaborative process: Upper Skagit Tribe and Lummi Nation.

The Division of Child Support has formal cooperative child support agreements with four tribes: Nisqually, Nez Perce, Colville, and Kalispel. DCS has negotiated child support program or operating agreements with most of the Tribal TANF tribes: Lower Elwha Klallam, Colville, Spokane, Quinault, Nooksack, and South Puget Intertribal Planning Agency (SPIPA-consortium of Nisqually, Squaxin Island, Skokomish tribes). DCS has informal agreements with many other tribes.

Tribal Child Support Programs The Division of Child Support works collaboratively with the tribes in Washington State that operate Tribal Child Support programs: Port Gamble S'Klallam, Puyallup, and the Lummi Nation. The Division works closely with two tribes that have Start-Up Tribal Child Support programs, Colville and Quinault, and with other tribes interested in pursuing Tribal Child Support Programs.

Tribal TANF Local Community Services Offices (CSOs) work collaboratively with the eight tribes and one tribal consortium that operate Tribal TANF programs: Colville, Port Gamble S'Klallam, Lower Elwha Klallam, Quileute, Quinault, Spokane, Tulalip, Nooksack and SPIPA-(consortium of Nisqually, Squaxin Island, Skokomish tribes). Collaboration ensures eligible tribal members have access to food, medical, and child care assistance and other services available through the CSOs. In Spokane, a financial worker from the Spokane Southwest CSO is out-stationed with the Spokane Tribal TANF program.

Collaboration with the Office of the Superintendent for Public Instruction (OSPI)

The Division of Child Care and Early Learning (DCCEL) and Division of Employment and Assistance Programs (DEAP) continues to work collaboratively with OSPI to promote the health and well-being of children through the provision of quality early learning/school readiness services, nutrition services and nutritious meals for children in public and private schools and child care facilities across the state.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT

The ESA Strategic Plan is the result of a dynamic process that continuously involves staff, leaders, and stakeholders. The "core" of the plan, developed almost two years ago, involved statewide meetings with over 200 staff at all levels. Almost 800 staff also participated in an on-line survey to help evaluate whether the draft goals and objectives for the administration reflected real priorities for those providing direct service. Finally, Economic Services also sought input from the administration's Economic Services Advisory Committee (ESAC). The issues and priorities identified by ESAC were consistent with those received from management and staff and helped clearly establish direction for the organization over the coming years.

Over the past two years, the plan has been revised and refined, based on regular Government Management and Accountability Performance (GMAP) reviews. These reviews provided a structured opportunity for discussion and evaluation of performance and critical issues for the administration, as well as the ability to refine and target strategies designed to meet vital performance measures.

FUTURE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- **Managing with major federal budget changes.** The 2006 federal budget provisions will have major impact on Washington's WorkFirst, Working Connections Child Care, and child support programs. The budget significantly reduces funding for child support enforcement and imposes new unfunded mandates, such as requiring states to enforce medical support obligations against custodial parents, in addition to non-custodial parents. Washington's program may lose approximately \$123.9 million in base funding over the four-year reduction period (2007 – 2010). The changes also impose substantial new work participation requirements for WorkFirst, while providing no new TANF block grant funding and only \$200 million a year in additional Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) funding for states (nationally).
- **Working in partnership to redesign our service delivery systems and business operations in cost-effective ways** that support the delivery of integrated and coordinated services to people in need with multiple issues.
- **Realigning programs and services that serve vulnerable families** (like WorkFirst, Basic Food, Medicaid and child welfare) to the greatest extent possible – to make it easier for families to access the help they need, reduce workload, and ease administrative burdens.
- **Managing heavier workload associated with Medicaid changes.** Major changes in the state's Medicaid program have significantly increased the time that workers spend determining eligibility and managing cases.
- **Strengthening program integrity.** A key challenge facing Economic Services is improving payment accuracy for WorkFirst, Basic Food, Medicaid, and child care subsidy programs without compromising service quality in the face of growing caseloads and increased workload.

Chapter 4 • Goals, Objectives, Strategies and Performance Measures

A: INCREASE EMPLOYMENT AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Goal 1: ESA provides services and supports that assist people in avoiding or reducing poverty and help them reach their highest level of self-sufficiency

Objective 1: Quickly connect individuals and families to the cash, medical, work-focused, and other services and benefits they need

Strategies:

- Monitor the process and impact of WorkFirst redesign; recommend adjustments as needed
- Identify and implement best practices statewide to more quickly engage clients with services

Performance Measures:

- Number of applications processed
- Number of applications processed timely
- Number of individuals/families receiving: WorkFirst, General Assistance (GA), Refugee Cash Assistance, Working Connections Child Care, Basic Food, and Medical Assistance (activity: F039, F043, F083, F100, F108)
- Number of entries and exits to the WorkFirst program
- Percentage of Diversion Cash Assistance (DCA) clients receiving WorkFirst after 6 and 12 months (activity: F024)
- Number of WorkFirst entries to pathways to employment within 30 days
- Percentage of WorkFirst families engaged in activities within 30 days
- Percentage of WorkFirst adults participating in full-time work or work-like activities
- Percentage of WorkFirst adults participating in part-time activities
- Number of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) applications or interim assistance agreements
- Number of new job starts/new hires
- Number of clients receiving Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) by co-payment level
- ***Percentage of individuals who leave assistance due to self-sufficiency***

Objective 2: Reduce the number of people who go hungry (activity: F038, F042)

Strategies:

- Measure the effectiveness of outreach contracts

Performance Measures:

- Number of applications processed
- Number of Basic Food households
- ***Percentage of individuals and families who are at or below 125% of the federal poverty level who are participating in the Basic Food Program***
- ***Percentage of individuals and families with food insecurity or hunger (national survey)***

Objective 3: Enhance economic security of children through child support enforcement efforts

Strategies:

- Improve use of automation to collect child support
- Increase employer compliance with new hire reporting

Performance Measures:

- Percentage of children with paternity established (activity: F010)
- Percentage of cases with child support orders
- Percentage of monthly child support that is collected when due (activity: F010)
- Percentage of cases receiving payments toward past due child support (activity: F010)
- **Total child support collected (activity: F010)**
- Monthly child support order amounts
- Percentage of child support payments processed within two days
- **Percentage of non-custodial parents paying support for their children**

Goal 2: Families and individuals receive quality services and are treated with dignity and respect

Objective 1: Provide responsive, accurate, and timely delivery of services to families and individuals who apply for benefits

Strategies:

- Streamline and improve effectiveness distribution of child support
- Simplify ACES letters/notices
- Improve business practices for Washington Telephone Assistance Program (WTAP)
- Identify and implement call center best practices statewide

Performance Measures:

- Percentage of applications processed within program timelines for WorkFirst, General Assistance, Basic Food, Medical, and Refugee Cash Assistance
- Percentage of clients reporting they were treated with dignity and respect
- Basic Food accuracy rate at or above the national average
- Percentage of child support payments sent within two business days of receipt
- CSD call center average speed of answer

Objective 2: Encourage community and consumer input into policy development & service delivery

Strategies:

- Implement CSD customer service advisory plan
- Implement user testing for all forms, letters, brochures, WACs, etc.
- Attain more effective use of ESA Advisory Committee
- Attain more effective use of Indian Policy Advisory Committee (IPAC)

Performance Measures:

- Percentage of forms developed with consumer input
- Percentage of WACs developed with consumer input
- Number of staff trained in "plain talk" communicating

Objective 3: Provide culturally competent services to families and individuals (activity: F068)

Strategies:

- Improve the quality and integrity of data related to services provided to Refugees and Immigrants and clients with Limited English Proficiency
- Develop a plan to implement cultural competency into policy development and service delivery
- Improve our capacity to communicate with clients and providers in their primary language
- Train staff to be culturally competent
- Increase the number of culturally competent providers with whom we contract
- Analyze and address potential disproportionality in service delivery
- Implement and monitor the ESA Diversity Plan

Performance Measures:

- Percentage of contracts (or contract expenditures) awarded to Certified Minority and Women-owned Businesses (MWBE)

Objective 4: Work with Tribes on a government-to-government basis to provide services in ways that best meet the needs of Native Americans**Strategies:**

- Provide training to staff regarding Administrative policy 7.01, working government-to-government, and the Centennial Accord
- Implement and monitor 7.01 Plan
- Provide technical assistance to Tribes who wish to operate their own child support and/or TANF programs

Performance Measures:

- Number/percentage of mid-level and executive managers and Tribal liaisons attending:
 - Government-to-Government training
 - 7.01 training
 - Centennial Accord training
- Number of Tribes operating TANF programs
- Number of Tribes operating child support programs

B: REINFORCE STRONG MANAGEMENT TO INCREASE PUBLIC TRUST**Goal 1: ESA is a fiscally and socially responsible organization that provides quality stewardship of public funds in support of our mission****Objective 1: Manage programs and services within the budget/FTEs allocated****Strategies:**

- Develop and implement a facility planning vision for ESA
- Conduct a workload study to determine appropriate staffing levels
- Monitor and adjust for the impact of changes in federal funding

Performance Measures:

- Budget compliance (fiscal reports)

Objective 2: Use audits and performance reviews to mitigate/manage risks in all aspects of the business and to assure quality services at appropriate cost

Strategies:

- Respond to new SAO Performance Audits
- Develop quality assurance plans that will address expected federal changes in child care, medical, and TANF
- Establish a process to ensure we complete and follow-through with corrective action plans
- Develop/maintain disaster recover plans
- Develop and apply contract monitoring standards

Performance Measures:

- Number of repeat audit findings

Objective 3: Support business practices to protect the environment and encourage efficient use of resources

Strategies:

- Complete and implement the Sustainability Plan
- Provide education/information and encourage the use of Commute Trip Reduction program

Measures:

C: VALUE AND DEVELOP EMPLOYEES

Goal 1: ESA leads and develops an effective workforce

Objective 1: Recruit and retain competent employees

Strategies:

- Develop and implement training for managers on effective recruiting, interviewing, and hiring
- Develop an open-competitive, objective hiring protocol for WMS and Exempt employees
- Develop and implement a process to recruit and support culturally competent and diverse staff
- Develop and implement a process to ensure managers provide regular and timely employee performance feedback
- Develop a process to provide both formal and informal recognition regularly to ESA employees

Performance Measures:

- Percentage of recent appointments of minorities/persons with disabilities
- Percentage of staff who are minorities or persons with disabilities compared to percentage in customer base (caseload)
- Percentage of employee evaluations completed timely
- Percentage of staff who feel they are treated with dignity and respect by their peers and managers
- Percentage of overall employee satisfaction with their job
- Percentage of employees leaving for jobs outside ESA

Objective 2: Improve access, relevance, and quality of training and professional development

Strategies:

- Implement the ESA Strategic Training Plan
- Develop individual development plans for all employees
- Increase participation in the ESA mentoring program
- Develop core competencies for each job classification
- Improve the effectiveness of ESA-provided training

Performance Measures:

- Percentage of staff who feel their professional development is encouraged and supported
- Percentage of staff who feel their manager/supervisor supports their participation in continuous learning
- Percentage of employees who feel their skills and/or training enable them to do their job well
- Percentage of staff who completed required training within timeframe
- Number of mentoring pairs
- Percentage of job classifications with core competencies
- Percentage of increase in pre- vs. post-test
- Percentage of staff with performance Development Plans

- Percentage of staff who have received meaningful praise within the last month
- Percentage of staff who feel their manager/supervisor recognizes employees and teams for their contributions

Objective 3: Develop and support strong, principled-centered leaders

Strategies:

- Create and implement a comprehensive professional/leadership development program
- Implement and monitor ESA Succession Plan

Measures:

- Number of 360 feedback surveys completed
- Percentage of staff completing leadership program who feel the training made a difference
- ESA turnover rate compared to DSHS/other benchmark
- Number of leadership mentor pairs
- Percentage of overall employee satisfaction
- Percentage of overall satisfaction of leaders

Goal 2: ESA has the infrastructure, information, and systems to help people do their jobs

Objective 1: Staff has the equipment, business system applications, information, and technology necessary to do their jobs

Strategies:

- Implement ACES webification
- Complete Service Delivery Review (SDR)
- Improve e-referrals from CSD to DCS
- Identify TANF reauthorization systems support needs
- Enhance e-Find (client match spider)
- Develop and implement an administration-level infrastructure plan
- Implement SEMS enhancements

Performance Measures:

- Percentage of staff reporting they are given adequate opportunity to request technology changes
- Percentage of time core systems are available (activity: F006)
- Percentage of critical security patches installed timely
- Percentage of infrastructure renewal targets met
- Percentage of staff reporting they have the infrastructure, information, and systems to help them do their jobs
- Percentage of staff with IT equipment replaced within the last three years
- Percentage of client benefits issues on time because of system reliability

Objective 2: Use collaborative planning and decision-making to implement major changes

Strategies:

- Provide systems, training, and other materials prior to implementation of change in policy
- Build capacity in project and change management

Performance Measures:

- Number of key employees trained in project management
- Percentage of policy changes that had IT support, training, and supporting materials in place prior to implementation
- Percentage of staff satisfaction with implementation of policy changes

Objective 3: Staff has a safe and appropriate work environment

Strategies:

- Update and communicate emergency plans annually
- Provide adequate emergency supplies
- Provide adequate training for all staff

Performance Measures:

- Percentage of facilities with standard safety equipment and supplies
- Percentage of facilities with current emergency plans
- Number of staff who completed safety training
- Number of accident/injury claims filed
- Percentage of staff who feel they are treated with dignity and respect by their peers and managers
- Percentage of staff who feel their managers are committed to keeping them safe

D: IMPROVE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS

Goal 1: ESA coordinates and integrates services to leverage resources to better serve families

Objective 1: Partner within and outside of ESA to improve services to clients

Strategies:

- Allow Tribes to determine eligibility
- Transition to the new Early Learning Agency
- Participate in implementation of Provider One
- Improve client information sharing between DCS and CSD
- Increase Tribal access to child support services
- Provide ACES access to Tribes

Performance Measures:

- Number of programs for which Tribes determine eligibility
- Number of Tribes determining eligibility by program
- Number of eligible persons with a serious mental disorder who receive medical assistance upon release from confinement in a correctional facility or state psychiatric hospital
- Number of Tribes doing their own child support program
- Number of Tribes with SEMS access
- Number of Tribes that apply and number that are approved to do their own child support program

Chapter 5 • Performance Assessment

GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY AND PERFORMANCE

Economic Services embarked on a regular performance review process early in 2005. Although based on concepts from both the New York and Baltimore models, ESA's review process is based on performance measures and strategic initiatives in the Performance Plan (strategic plan). The leadership team meets regularly, once or twice a month, on a specific portion of the strategic plan. Unlike the Baltimore and New York models, however, ESA's focus on shared ownership for success means a single topic presentation often involves multiple division leaders, each responsible for a critical component of performance. In the early months, presentations included questions and answers and were followed by a facilitated discussion designed to determine: if the initiatives were moving us in the right direction (as determined by the performance measures); what obstacles (if any) leaders needed to address; whether the partnerships are clearly identified and working well; and other issues that are affecting ESA's ability to carry out the initiative effectively. With increased experience with the process, it is now far more interactive and allows leadership to focus on discussions about critical issues, performance, and problem areas.

ESA established three primary goals for performance review meetings:

- Develop a shared understanding of performance (both program and fiscal) and the administration's strategic advancement (are we making progress on our initiatives)
- Provide an opportunity for problem-solving and immediate decision-making
- Establish and improve ESA team partnerships and focus on shared ownership for success

The underlying philosophy for performance review: whether directly involved in an issue or not, ESA leadership shares responsibility for celebrating successes, helping identify and solve problems, analyzing data and challenging assumptions, and re-deploying resources where and when they can to assist others. The process, which has been instrumental in helping ESA refine and focus more clearly on critical outcomes, has also lead to increased accountability and improved performance.

OTHER PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

Quality assurance is a critical part of continuous improvement efforts in Economic Services. A Quality Assurance office provides independent reviews in several areas, equipping staff and managers with information on performance and opportunities for improvement through training, monitoring, policy modifications, and additional reviews. For example:

- Quality Assurance (QA) staff recently conducted a telephone survey of WorkFirst recipients (429 parents) in sanction. This telephone survey, completed at the request of Community Services Division (CSD), determined the reasons why clients were not participating and identified barriers preventing them from participation. The information gained from this survey is being used to identify ways to assist clients in reconnecting with services available at the Community Services Offices (CSOs), and providing needed financial support to the families.
- Quality Assurance staff also conducts Management Evaluations, an in-depth analysis of office operations at selected CSOs. Washington State selects 9 CSOs per year and reviews those offices for compliance with civil rights, electronic benefit transfer (EBT) processing, client access, and customer service. In addition, QA staff review 135 cases per office for accuracy. Notifications are sent immediately to local offices for corrective actions. The United States Department of Agriculture/Food and Nutrition Service (USDA/FNS) monitors program and office compliance in the areas under review. In addition, on-site review of office procedures has helped identify improvements in customer service and workflow.
- Focused Accuracy Reviews are conducted on one or two CSOs each month, with selection based primarily on caseload size and Basic Food Program accuracy. Quality Assurance staff review cases to determine compliance with specific program requirements, such as case accuracy and timeliness of processing applications for people who need assistance immediately. The reviews help identify potential problem areas, including policy issues and training gaps, that can be fixed before becoming a larger problem that could affect the state's federal basic food payment accuracy rates.

CLOSING PERFORMANCE GAPS

- **Continue efforts focused on service delivery and client outcome improvements.** With the changes included in the federal budget bill, growing caseloads in programs, and staffing reductions, it is critical to focus on improvements that streamline processes and take maximum advantage of technology when appropriate and available while providing quality customer service.
- **Refine the performance review process, including a focus on improved data collection and analysis.** ESA has a wealth of program data available at the statewide level. However, in an effort to enhance the use of data to evaluate performance and drive decisions, the administration wants to develop a more comprehensive "data dashboard" and decision support model that provides data down to the office, and perhaps worker, level in as many areas as possible. ESA also wants to improve data collection capability for administrative and staff measures identified in the plan, as well as enhance data analysis capability.

- **Focus efforts on initiatives designed to support staff.** Many of the initiatives in the ESA plan focus on staff support areas, from recruitment and retention to leadership development and providing staff with tools they need to do their jobs.
- **Effective use of outside reviews and audits.** ESA wants to build on the excellent quality assurance program already in place by more effectively using audits and other outside performance reviews to inform leaders and improve performance.

Chapter 6 • Internal Capacity Assessment

WORKFORCE AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

With over 4,400 staff, recruiting, hiring, and retaining qualified, culturally competent and diverse staff is a primary goal for ESA. The administration's Succession, Diversity, Training, and WorkForce Development plans combine to provide a more cohesive look at the issues and strategies, including:

- Using employee feedback through staff surveys to determine more about overall employee satisfaction and workplace concerns to continue to reduce the 6.4% turnover rate in ESA
- Developing a more comprehensive leadership development program, including implementation of a 360 assessment and a mentoring program, to help address identified gaps in recruiting and hiring leaders at all levels of the organization
- Developing strategies to address the "leadership gap" that could be created as almost 220 WMS, supervisory, and exempt individuals are eligible to retire in 2006
- Evaluating the Percentage of staff who are minorities or persons with disabilities compared to percentage in customer base (caseload) to ensure staff composition broadly represents the customer ESA serves
- Developing strategies to address recruitment concerns for information technology positions throughout the administration
- Identifying core competencies for all job classification to assist in recruitment, training, and performance evaluation
- Increasing the quality and availability of training for ESA staff to ensure the administration meets both required training and job-specific needs of staff

TECHNOLOGY CAPACITY

Economic Services, which operates a data system that ranks in the top 2 percentile in the entire state, based on size and complexity, relies heavily on technology to achieve our mission. Four core, mission critical, systems provide the backbone of ESA's current service delivery infrastructure.

- **ACES** (Automated Client Eligibility System) is an integrated eligibility, client correspondence, and payment system. It currently supports field staff in four different DSHS administrations in determining eligibility for over 60 cash, food, and medical assistance programs.
- **SEMS** (Support Enforcement Management System) supports the state's child support collection and accounting efforts.

- **eJAS** (Electronic Jobs Automated System) is an integrated case management system that supports all four state partner agencies and contracted service providers in delivery of Washington State's welfare-to-work program, WorkFirst.
- **BarCode**, originally developed to track client case records, has grown into a mission critical system supporting the client Electronic Case Record as well as a document assignment tracking system known as Document Management System (DMS).

In the past few years ESA has focused on improving client services and streamlining operations by leveraging technology in several key areas:

- **Document Management Systems** have been employed in both the Child Support and Community Services operations, speeding delivery and processing of incoming documents, as well as virtually eliminating lost documents and client case records.
- **Automated Call Distribution (ACD) systems and Interactive Voice Response (IVR) Systems** are now widely used across the organization to allow clients to do more of their business with ESA accurately and quickly over the phone. ACDs allow more flexibility in the handling of client phone calls by allowing load balancing across multiple workers and sites. IVRs continue to provide a great avenue for client self-service to forms and case information, allowing workers to focus on value added activities.

To support continued focus on streamlining processes, addressing increasing caseloads, and program accountability, several challenges in technology lie ahead:

- Protecting the sensitive nature of client data while allowing access for Tribes and others
- Improving usability of ESA's core legacy systems by implementing web front-ends, allowing more flexibility to support workflow and integration of other automated tools used by staff
- Enhancing the use of outside data sources to verify income and other information
- Using technology to automatically notify clients about obligations, appointments, etc. and to gather information from employers about new hires and other critical information

FINANCIAL CAPACITY

Implementation of the 2006 federal budget provisions provides one of the biggest fiscal challenges for Economic Services. ESA's largest block grant, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), has remained unchanged since its inception in 1996. However, that funding will likely be insufficient to meet the work requirements and expectations for the state included in the recent reauthorization of this grant. While the child care block grant received a net increase, that funding is also insufficient to maintain the program at current level. The budget reduces the capacity for matching federal funds and significantly reduces funding for child support enforcement while imposing new unfunded mandates. Finally, the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) for Washington was reduced by one-third.

ESA has seen a repeated theme from federal funding sources recently. Use of federal funds is being more strictly interpreted, with any perception of deviance from strict interpretations actively pursued. Collection of perceived overpayments is being pursued in advance of customary periods of advice and response.

The state's General Assistance caseload, entirely state-funded, continues to grow, causing continued re-examination of both program policies and state funding. Changes in the program could have significant impact on single, temporarily disabled adults, who have no other sources of income.

SERVICE DELIVERY CAPACITY

While the state's economic condition has improved, changes at the federal level are exhausting added resources the state is realizing. In order to sustain our basic programs, ESA must continue to refocus and direct efforts at the most efficient methods of service delivery, while maintaining high quality, customer-focused service. ESA's efforts focus on:

- **Using technology to streamline processes and increase service delivery capability where possible.** ESA has already capitalized on technology, but will continue this focus to maximize service delivery capacity.
- **Enhance contractor recruitment.** The administration continues to focus on recruiting and contracting with contractors who can best meet the needs of ESA clients. With a very diverse client base, increasing the use of culturally competent providers to support the delivery system is vital.
- **Improve the administration's contract development and monitoring capacity.** ESA is focusing on developing well-written, legally sound contracts and regular monitoring, both critical to ensuring delivery of desired results.



This document is also available electronically at:

www1.dshs.wa.gov/strategic

Persons with disabilities may request a hard copy by contacting DSHS at: 360.902.7800, or TTY: 800.422.7930.

Questions about the strategic planning process may be directed to DSHS Constituent Services at: 1.800.737.0617.

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